

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A system having an anvil and an ultrasonic blade, the anvil for providing support to a backed ply material during a cutting operation by the ultrasonic blade, the backed ply material traveling in a first direction and comprising a ply material and a backing, the backing being relatively more flexible than the ply and traveling in a first direction, the ultrasonic blade having a cutting profile, the ultrasonic blade being operable to travel along a cutting path, the cutting path being oriented in a transverse manner relative to the first direction, the anvil comprising:

a rigid base for securing the anvil to a cutting assembly;
an inverted "T" shaped channel in the rigid base and coinciding with the cutting path;
a "T" shaped insert ~~to mate~~ that mates with the channel;
a surface on the insert to support the backed ply material; and
a groove disposed upon the surface and coinciding with the cutting path, the groove being formed in the insert prior to any cutting operation by the ultrasonic blade and having a curved profile corresponding to a tip portion of the cutting profile of the ultrasonic blade, the groove providing support for the backing of the backed ply material during the cutting operation~~[,]~~ such that the ply and the relatively more flexible backing of the backed ply material diverge at an interface between the groove and the tip portion of the cutting profile of the ultrasonic blade, and the backing is urged into the groove during the cutting operation, the ultrasonic blade cutting the ply without cutting the backing during the cutting operation.

2. (Previously presented) The system according to claim 1, wherein the rigid base comprises a metal base.

3. (Previously presented) The system according to claim 2, wherein the metal base comprises a steel base.

4-5. (Canceled)

6. (Previously presented) The system according to claim 1, wherein the insert comprises a high pressure laminate.

7. (Previously presented) The system according to claim 1, wherein the insert comprises a polymeric material.

8. (Previously presented) The system according to claim 7, wherein the polymeric material comprises an ultra high molecular weight polymer.

9. (Previously presented) The system according to claim 7, wherein the polymeric material comprises nylon.

10-24. (Canceled)

25. (New) The system according to claim 1, wherein the groove has a predetermined depth, the predetermined depth being a function of a thickness and material characteristics of the backed ply material.